

Brief Information about the Survey of State Library Agencies

August 27, 1993

(With Timeline Updated to November 17, 1993)

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) are cooperating in a survey of state library agencies. This cooperation is based on the recommendations of COSLA in April 1992, continuing discussions throughout 1992, culminating in the appointment of the State Library Agencies Survey Steering Committee in November 1992. The Steering Committee met on December 18, 1992, March 26, 1993 and August 19, 1993. This information sheet provides background on the cooperative project.

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of this survey is to provide State and Federal policy makers with information about state library agencies.

State library agencies (StLAs) are key partners of the U.S. Department of Education and its Office of Library Programs in the administration of the Federal Library Services and Construction Act and other Federal programs aimed at improving research and education in the United States.

Without data on StLAs, the NCES educational data systems are incomplete: StLA programs and services, particularly the planning, coordinating and development responsibilities under Title III ("Interlibrary Cooperation and Resource Sharing") of the Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) program which StLA administer, affect the capacity of thousands of public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries, and special libraries vital to the nation. In the words of the theme of the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, "libraries enhance literacy, strengthen democracy and expand productivity." With the potential of the National Research and Education Network and its impact on library services, the leadership of state library agencies is essential as the people of the nation and states move into the 21st century.

It is vital that data on the services of StLAs be added to the NCES statistical picture because:

- * The millions of dollars of Federal LSCA funds and significant portions of state aid or state subsidies and contracts are not fully reported without collecting data from state library agencies.
- * The statewide services provided by the state library agencies are not reported.

- * Services provided to state government are not presently covered in any data collection efforts.
- * Often state library agencies use state or Federal funds as leverage to obtain cooperation on major state projects, such as resource sharing. The scope of these cooperative efforts is not captured anywhere.

Data on StLAs will complement NCES data collected regularly on public libraries, academic and school libraries and educational institutions and data collected occasionally on library systems, networks, and library and information services.

A 1977 NCES data collection carried out by Barratt Wilkins, State Library of Florida, provided a picture of StLAs as they stood 15 years ago. This survey will provide a current picture of StLAs and update such information annually.

Users of the Survey Results

The data collected in the StLA Survey will be useful to: (1) Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, (2) policy makers in the executive and legislative branches of Federal and state governments, (3) government and library administrators at Federal, state and local levels, (4) the American Library Association and its members and customers, and (5) library and public policy researchers.

Scope of the Survey

The survey will collect information on:

- (1) Inputs and outputs of state library agency¹ (StLA) services and operations in both direct library services and library development services.
- (2) Resources assigned to such allied operations as archives and records management in those states in which responsibilities are located in the state library

¹The "state library agency" is that department, agency or unit of state government designated by law or the Governor as "the state library administrative agency" for the purpose of administering LSCA funds. The functions of such agencies vary among the states; the common characteristic is that it is the state agency responsible for statewide library development; other functions may include operation of a library for government users and/or the public, network operation, interlibrary loan service, etc. For a recent detailed list of functions, see pages 353-4 of The State Library Agencies, 1991, 10th edition, compiled and edited by Amy Louise Kellerstrass (ASCLA, 1993).

agency². In such instances, data will not include extensive output measurements for such operations.³

- (3) StLAs in the 50 states (territorial data will be collected at a later date. Complete data is already collected from the District of Columbia as part of the annual FSCS public library survey).
- (4) Organizational and governance structure within which the StLA operates and changes taking place within that structure.

Process and People Involved in Developing the Survey

The survey is a joint effort of NCES, NCLIS and COSLA (the 50 states). Elaine Kroe, NCES Project Director, is responsible for overall direction and coordination of the survey. Keith Lance (Library Research Service, Denver CO) serves as consultant/contractor and is responsible to NCES for such deliverables as the survey instrument and the results of a pre-test. John Wunderly, Pinkerton Information Systems, is the NCES contractor for design of electronic collection of data. NCES supports the cost of a Steering Committee through a Memorandum of Understanding with NCLIS which provides administrative support. The Steering Committee works with federal staff and the survey consultant in developing the survey.

In addition, since this is a cooperative project of COSLA and the Federal government, the COSLA Research and Statistics Committees is expected to be informed and consulted at appropriate points.

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for the development of the survey includes chief officers representing:

²This is not an archives or museum study. The survey will collect data for StLA which are actually operating such services (as does Kentucky, Oklahoma or Virginia). It would not collect such data for StLAs which do not operate such services, as in the case of Illinois, Michigan or New York. It may be necessary to identify the scope on a state-by-state basis inasmuch as the laws of some states invest responsibility for the StLA in a constitutional or other state officer such as a Secretary of State or a Secretary of Education.

³Some output data on allied functions may be needed in order to get a better picture of the library and library development operations within StLAs which includes allied operations. In all cases, to the extent feasible and appropriate, input and output data will be consistent with data elements in other NCES surveys.

- (1) Different types of organizational and governance structure such as:
 - independent board or commission
 - cabinet agency
 - an education department
 - other state department (cultural, economic and tourism administrative or general service, etc.),
- (2) StLAs which operate a major reference library,
- (3) Large and small StLAs,
- (4) SLAs which operate other-than-library functions, and
- (5) The demography of COSLA, with attention to geographic location, gender, tenure, and interest in statistics.

Chief Officers on the Steering Committee include Nancy Bolt. Richard Cheski, Joseph Shubert and Barratt Wilkins. The Steering Committee also includes representation of:

ALA (Mary Jo Lynch of the ALA Office of Research)

ASCLA (Tony Miele, President of the State Library Agencies Section)

NCES (Carrol B. Kindel and Elaine Kroe)

NCLIS (Peter Young, Mary Alice Reszetar and John Lorenz)

Office of Library Programs (Ray Fry or his designee)

The Chair of the COSLA Statistics Committee will chair the Steering Committee. After an initial meeting in December 1992, the Steering Committee will complete most of its work by mail, phone or E-Mail. The Steering Committee met in March 1993 for detailed discussion of scope and data, and in August 1993 for review of the draft instrument before the pre-test.

Timeline

December 1992

first meeting of the committee for initial discussion of (1) the public policy issues for which the survey will provide information (2) purpose, scope and data problems, (3) proposed data elements, and (4) process, workplans and roles of participants.

February 1993

consultant/contractor appointed

February-March 1993

draft elements and definitions developed by contractor consultant for discussion with Steering Committee in March

March 1993

Steering Committee meets on data elements and definitions

April 1993

continued work on draft elements and definitions by contractor consultant (with input from the Steering Committee by phone calls and phone conferences, mail and e-mail)

June 18, 1993

survey instrument drafted

August 1993

steering committee meets to review instrument; will see refined drafts in October and November, before pre-test

January 1994

pretest of survey collection in five states

March 1994

pre-test results available; Steering Committee meets on March 30 to (1) review pre-test results and subsequent staff work leading to full data collection, (2) make decisions relating to the Beta test, and (3) discuss the format for presentation of data and the analyses expected in the report

June 1994

final instrument and software developed

September 1994

collect data for 1993-94

January 1995

first results of full data

8/20/93, 11/17/93

**Charge to The Steering Committee for the
NCES State Library Agencies Survey**

The Steering Committee for the NCES Survey of State Library Agencies will:

- identify the issues for which the survey will produce policy level information and data,
- develop policies for the survey,
- determine the parameters of the survey,
- identify data elements and definition issues and reach conclusion on them,
- settle on (1) the formats for presentation of data and (2) the analyses expected in the report, and
- otherwise assist in planning and carrying out the SLA survey.

Charge: October 6, 1992

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